

Emily has a Giving-Back Heart

Eleven-year-old Emily had a rough start from the beginning. The young Kansan was born with multiple heart defects. At one month old she underwent open heart surgery. 24 hours after surgery she suffered a cardiac arrest. While in the hospital she also suffered a collapsed lung, blood infection and had bleeding in her chest. But Emily was determined to go to Disney World. Her wish trip took her there in 2018 and was facilitated by Give Kids The World Village in Kissimmee, Florida.



[Give Kids The World Village](#) is an 89-acre, whimsical nonprofit resort, that provides week-long, cost-free wish vacations to critically ill children and their families from around the world who want to visit Central Florida. Families that visit Give Kids The World must be referred by one of more than 250 wish-granting organizations or foundations, such as [Make-A-Wish Foundation](#).

A stay at the Village is much more than a weeklong vacation; it's a chance for these families to laugh together, play together, and create unforgettable memories away from hospital stays and medical treatments.

Emily's mom says her GKTW visit in June 2018 was "truly magical. She loved the Ms. Merry bedtime tuck-ins. She still talks about it. My favorite part of the entire trip was that Emily and her older brother

Andrew both asked to come back as volunteers. I hope one day we will be able to do that."

Last year, the Village closed to wish families like Emily's due to the global pandemic, delaying more than 6,000 wishes. Despite the closure, the Village created a unique opportunity last December for visitors and donors to experience – Night of a Million Lights. Night of a Million Lights was designed to raise funds to ensure that the wishes of critically ill children could return bigger and better than ever before once the time was right to reopen. Last year, USA Today named Night of a Million Lights the "Number One Thing To Do in December in Orlando."

It was such a huge success that the Village has decided to do it again this year and the [Workers' Compensation Institute](#) is playing its part in bringing it back. WCI has organized a Gala event "Winter Wonderland" to be held December 11, 2021 in conjunction with GKTW's second annual Night of a Million Lights. For more information about the WCI-GKTW collaboration, [click here](#).

WCI & GKTW's 2021 Winter Wonderland Experience



Bring friends and family along to join us for a magical holiday experience Saturday, December 11. Last year, USA Today named GKTW's Night of a Million Lights the "Number One Thing To Do in December in Orlando!"